



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

February 2014 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

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Price of liberty – engage, or accept marching to the corporatist agenda



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

“How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?” Pope Francis asked an audience at the Vatican.

Our values have been distorted such that we are more invested in outcomes of sports matches or the day's closing numbers at Wall Street than we are in the leadership of our country. We throw ourselves into maximizing profits rather than building our communities. Is this true, and if so, how do we reinstate standards of communal well-being?

Consider further sentiments from Pope Francis, who in less than a year

at the center of the Catholic world, has garnered a reputation for being a man-of-the-people:

“A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules.”

“To all this we can add widespread corruption and self-serving tax evasion, which has taken on worldwide dimensions. The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits,” according to the pope's apostolic exhortation.

He goes on to explain that in this system, that tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which has become the only rule we live by.

Further, recent IRS filing reports show that in the past three years, the wealth of the United States' richest 1 percent has grown by 31 percent, while the remaining 99 percent of the population experienced an income rise of less than 1 percent. The income disparity is now the largest in 100 years, and it is taking a toll on our communities.

Pope Francis asserts that the autonomy of the markets and financial speculators perpetuate large-scale poverty. One of his first actions as pope was to rein in the banks under church control.

It is up to us to do the same with our institutions, but can we? Corporatists are so entwined with our government that it will take an uprising of people like we haven't seen in 40 years to wrest control away from the financiers and CEOs and restore meaningful regulation and control. Look how anemic the Dodd-Frank bill was in the wake of the financial crisis, and how moneyed interests continue to whittle it away further.

According to the website Think By Numbers, the federal government spends \$60 billion on public housing and rental subsidies for low-income families, compared to more than \$90 billion on corporate subsidies. Oil companies alone receive \$70 billion. And that's not counting the nearly \$60 billion a year in tax breaks corporations



Janet Goldwasser of Pittsfield Township joined the New Hampshire Rebellion to call out politicians on money in politics.

enjoy by sheltering profits offshore. Or the \$700 billion bailout banks got in 2008.

Consider how this plays out here in Washtenaw County, especially in last month's arctic weather.

“The Centers for Disease Control says people should be able to get out of the cold if it is 40 degrees or colder. That is what we want,” said Tracy Williams of Michigan Radio.

Unfortunately, it's not in the budget, according to Ellen Schulmeister, executive director of the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County. She says it would cost an additional \$200,000 to keep the shelter open most of the winter in daytime hours, and there's just no money for that.

And even if the shelter were open, people have to get there. Last month's drop in temperature was accompanied by a foot of snow that cut off transportation options. Schulmeister frequently has asserted that if there were sufficient low-income housing, the shelters would not be full.

Corporate control of America is creeping further into local politics, beyond the ever-larger tax abatements and incentives given to corporations in their communities. Ballot measures and candidates for state office, including judges, already are being funded by undisclosed out-of-state donors. The Michigan Campaign Finance Network estimated that donors poured over \$14 million into ads attempting to influence our vote in the Michigan Supreme Court races.

Last month, the Michigan legislature increased the personal limits on campaign contributions from \$3,400 to \$7,000 and they added a provision that allows donations to remain anonymous, negating Secretary of State Ruth Johnson's proposal to revise administrative rules and require donor disclosure for “issue ads” airing near elections. Despite Governor Snyder's campaign promises and Ann Arbor News column highlighting the need for campaign funding transparency, he failed to veto the bill.

“[It] ensures that those who can afford to give thousands to politicians can now give even more. It will amplify the voices and viewpoints of our wealthiest citizens while drowning out everyone else,” said Wayne State Law School Interim Dean Jocelyn Benson.

Citizens in other states are taking action to regain control. Thousands of activists in North Carolina have descended on the state legislature building for “Moral Mondays.” They are demanding that lawmakers reverse some of their more brutal policies, such as cutting unemployment benefits, refusing to expand Medicaid and rolling back voting rights. More than 900 activists were arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience.

Similar campaigns started last month with “Truthful Tuesdays” in South Carolina and “Moral Mondays” in Georgia.

“Georgia has gone hard-right at a time when income inequality is at its height, unemployment is high, we have the creation of an economy designed to provide low paying, dead-end jobs and we need an effort to respond to that,” said State Sen. Vincent Fort (D-Atlanta). “Moral Mondays is exactly that kind of effort.”

New Hampshire activists with the New Hampshire Rebellion believe that no other serious problem will be adequately addressed in the United States until campaign finance reform is enacted. They walked the state in mid-January, gathering commitments from New Hampshire voters to ask every 2016 presidential candidate, “What will you do to end this corruption?”

Pittsfield Township residents Janet Goldwasser and Stu Dowty, organizers of the Washtenaw County group Reclaiming Our American Democracy from Big Money, joined the New Hampshire trek and had this to say, “I think the key thing is that this is an issue that resonates with people. We stopped to do a presentation at St. Anselm College in Manchester and the room was packed with a diverse group of people, a turnout much larger than expected. Laurence Lessig, the Harvard professor who organized the march, said that 96% of people agree that big money has too much influence in our system. The problem is that 91% think nothing can be done about it. That's what the march is addressing.”

The land of the free and the home of the brave – that's about people. And if we wish to remain free, we need to act more bravely; to wade into politics and the legal system – cesspools we've studiously avoided.

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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A slow warp of time



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell
Groundcover Contributor

The winter of my final semester in seminary, I lived through Boston's Great Blizzard of 1978. I was a houseparent at the nursing school for an area hospital, was running the switchboard for the older women who couldn't get to school for that regular responsibility, and was in the midst of reading a long, recently-published volume of the letters written between Abigail and John Adams. We lost an entire week of school that February. It was an unusual time, a virtual weather adventure for me – safe and well sheltered at age 25.

Not since February 1978 has my immediate weather impacted so dramatically my movement through time. January 2014 dawned, and snow piled up and drifted around me. With howling winds, a polar vortex settled in, and my front storm door froze inside and out, including all the hardware and the handle. For several weeks before, during, and after that intense cold, numerous events were canceled in my life and the larger life of my community. Lots of holiday plans were altered. A winter's supply of road salt was exhausted by the fourth day of the new year. In one stretch of four days, I didn't venture out of my driveway. A to-do list beyond the house became irrelevant. Internal and external quiet deepened. My power remained on. I had enough food. And my thoughts turned to what it meant to begin the year in such a suspended and still manner with a

heightened connection to dormancy.

Like many of us, I've grown used to months that fly by. Sometimes I can't believe how quickly time appears to pass, or how late in the year it has gotten. By contrast, the days of January 2014 have progressed very slowly for me. There has been a spaciousness to time that is usually reserved for occasional days or weeks of vacation. When you read this column in February, we will probably be done with groundhog-tracking for another year, and hopes will abound for spring to be just a mere corner away. As enticing as those green dreams are, I want to remain present a little longer with this out-of-the-ordinary January.

This month, I've become aware of how quickly I tend to barrel through days, weeks, and seasons. At my full

tilt, one thing steadily follows another. Cramming days so routinely accelerates my sense of their passage. They are here and then they are gone. By contrast, emptying days of what isn't essential and being more intentional about what I do within them offers its own satisfying fullness.

I do look forward to more routine days of dry pavement, fewer canceled plans, and less impeded movement, but I also long to learn from the slow warping of time this last month. An examination of the default setting of "more is always better" intrigues me. I have come to appreciate what deliberateness and periodic dormancy might bring to my days. Knowing the precious passage of those days at less of a breakneck speed would be a gift.

The corporatists are coming, the corporatists are coming!

CORPORATIONS ARE NOT PEOPLE: WHY THEY HAVE MORE RIGHTS THAN YOU DO, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

by Jeffrey D. Clements
c. 2012 McGraw Hill

Book review by Susan Beckett

Journalist Bill Moyers' introduction establishes the premise of this book: *"Wealth acquired under capitalism is in and of itself no enemy to democracy, but wealth armed with political power – power to choke off opportunities and deny public needs – is a proven danger to the 'general welfare' proclaimed in the Preamble to the Constitution as one of the justifications for America's existence."*

Clements proceeds to chronicle the events that moved U.S. corporations from constructed entities with protections that facilitated the growth of businesses, to entities with protections afforded individuals and more – thus realizing the vision of Lewis Powell.

Powell, an activist judge with an agenda, cultivated a climate in the 1970s that eventually yielded a 2010 Supreme Court ruling granting corporations the same free speech rights as people. Prior to Powell, government had consistently reigned in over-reaching corporate political power and affirmed that the term *citizens* "applies only to natural persons... not to artificial persons created by the legislature and possessing only such attributes as the legislature has prescribed." One effect of the contradictory Supreme Court ruling, *Citizen's United v. the FEC*, is that corporations can put as

much money as they wish into any kind of campaign. They are now unfettered in their ability to dominate advertising on local, state and national issues as well as for political candidates, which includes judges in states like Michigan. Uncontrolled spending is becoming uncontrollable spending.

Clements points out that corporations are chartered by states as entities with certain privileges and protections that facilitate their ability to grow a business. A business can incorporate in any state, regardless of where it actually operates. Since Delaware offers the fewest restrictions, more than 300 of the mega-corporations listed on the Fortune 500, and over half of the publicly-traded companies in the United States, are incorporated in Delaware. That means that only the 900,000 citizens of Delaware have any control over the actions of corporations that affect us all.

The fascinating account of Powell's campaign began when he served on the board of Phillip Morris and advised the Tobacco Institute, then under attack for marketing cigarettes to children and

falsifying reports. Powell was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1972. In 1977, Powell submitted to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce a strategy to achieve political power through "united action" using an "activist-minded Supreme Court" to shape "social, economic and political change" to the advantage of corporations.

In 1978, Powell set his plan in motion, casting the deciding vote and writing the majority opinion that established speech rights for corporations in *First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*. This ruling struck down a Massachusetts law that banned corporate political spending from targeting a citizen referendum. He continued his campaign in 1982, when he wrote the majority opinion striking down a New York law that inhibited utility companies from promoting energy consumption, thus putting the corporation's interest in profits over the people's interest in energy conservation.

This corporatist agenda is distinct from conservative, moderate or liberal political leanings. (While the Republican Party is often associated with corporatism, factions of the party strongly oppose it.) Corporatists favor big government and regulation when it is to their advantage in squelching competition and offloading expenses to the general public, and small government when legislation restricting their activities in light of the public good impedes their relentless drive for profit.

see CORPORATISTS, page 4

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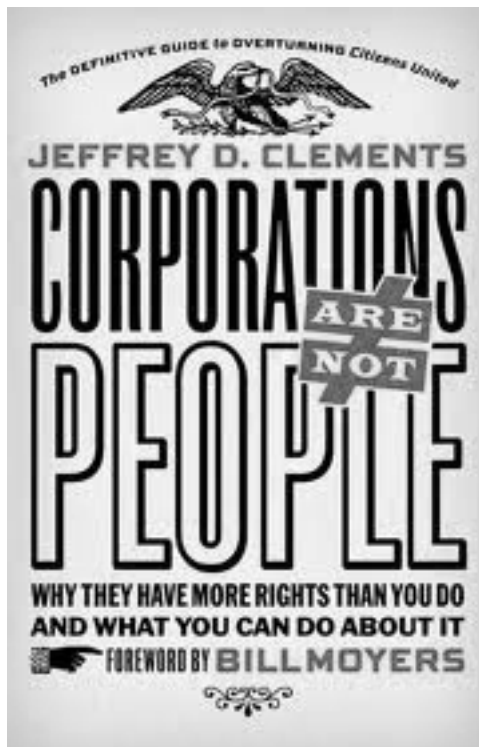
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The corporatists are coming, the corporatists are coming!

continued from page 3

This is powerfully illustrated in the plight of the citizens of West Virginia, whose attempts to protect their homes, health and environment from the onslaught of strip mining that has decapitated 500 Appalachian mountains, were repeatedly overturned by the Appeals Court. Despite the fact that strip mining requires only a fraction of the number of workers as traditional mining and covers great swaths of land and water with thick, exterminating dust, energy companies' ability to control the national conversation has distorted the picture so that people believe opposing the energy companies will lead to fewer jobs.

Further, entrenched industries like coal manipulate the laws such that the corporations do not absorb the cost of repairing the damage they cause to the environment, people and wildlife in the vicinity. This allows them to keep their costs artificially below those of the emerging green energy technologies. This suppression of innovation and new industries by those that are able to use wealth and crony capitalism to skew regulations in their favor is another side-effect of corporate "speech."



Similarly, corporatists have convinced the public that low wages and poor benefits are the cost of keeping jobs in America. However, when worker productivity, wages and profits are examined, it is quite clear that workers' money is now largely going into the pockets of top executives and share-

holders – and their financial managers.

Clements describes how corporatism infiltrates our schools, even creating an industry of for-profit universities, many of which leave students with no degree but mountains of debt financed by the federal government. The skyrocketing cost of college forces many, even those who do graduate, to embrace the corporatist way of life so they can repay their loans.

The financial sector pushed through the deregulation that led to the sub-prime lending disaster and subsequent recession. Many of their actions were illegal, but, not being people, they were not incarcerated for their crimes, merely fined a fraction of their ill-gotten gains.

Empires and societies often collapse not from a sudden blow, but from a long-standing unwillingness or inability to adapt. Like a modern Paul Revere, Clements warns us of immediate and impending danger. *Corporations Are Not People* concludes with strategies for restoring democracy and republican government, starting with amending the Constitution to make clear what rights are reserved for human beings.

A local group based in Washtenaw County that is working on these strategies is Reclaiming Our American Democracy from Big Money. Others, like Move to Amend, Wolf Pac and Represent Us, are national organizations with chapters in the state. This is an issue, regardless of your political orientation, that demands attention if you hope to continue to live in a country whose decisions reflect the will and interests of people.

Corporations Are Not People is available in bookstores and the Ann Arbor District Library.



SWAMI'S DICTIONARY

Quid Pro Quo Pro

Someone who trades political favors for money. A politician.

"We have a deeply divided body politic. Half of our population believes our elections are broken, the other half believes they are fixed." – Swami Beyondananda



Corporations are human!! Really?

by Martin Stolzenberg
Groundcover Contributor

Here we go again. Now The U.S. Supreme Court is about to hear another case that may enhance the peoplehood status of corporations (made notorious by Mitt Romney's infamous 2012 quote, "Corporations are people, my friend"). This case relates to the Affordable Care Act, which requires for-profit corporations to provide contraceptive protection for its employees. The Appeals Court already ruled in favor of Hobby Lobby (no kidding – that really is the name) and Conestoga, two related cases in which both companies essentially claim the Act is impinging on their religious beliefs.

Using the 14th Amendment as the basis for their objections, the principals of the companies claim that forcing them to give full contraceptive coverage to their employees defies their religious beliefs, and their rights are being impinged. Their claim has already been upheld by lower courts and a final decision will be forthcoming in June 2014. The Conservative majority in the Court can be expected to rule that religious rights will be added to the human qualities of corporations.

This may seem ridiculous, but the U.S. Supreme Court already upheld this notion of corporate personhood in a sweeping decision in 2010. The case was *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. A bitterly divided 5-4 Court ruled that corporations are protected by the 14th Amendment and are entitled to free speech. They can, therefore, make unlimited political contributions. Yippee, every dollar can now vote. This unleashed a torrent of political contributions, mostly to the Republican Party, that has made the election process even more dollar-sensitive than in the past.

We are faced with the possibility that, as far as the law is concerned, corporations, like people, can have religion and vote. So it is not unreasonable to ask, *What other human qualities or traits do corporations have?*

It turns out, if you think about it, there are quite a few. Like people, corporations can:

Be born or *incorporate*.

Have feelings. This is a *tender offer*.

Get angry in a *hostile takeover*.

Go through adolescence in an *emerging technology*.

Have sex – all the shareholders, customers and vendors that large corporations have *screwed*.

Get married. They call it a *merger*.

Have children. This is called a *spin-off*.

Get divorced. It's a *corporate breakup*.

Have to pay a fine for indecent exposure. This one is a *cost of doing business*.

Get away with murder. They call it a *golden parachute*.

Become senile, or *obsolete*.

Become very ill, or *fil-ing for bankruptcy*.

Finally, die or *dissolve*.

So, not only do corporations have many of the qualities of humans, they even follow our life cycle. Who knows how far this analogy could be stretched – by reverse logic, the Court may next carry this one step further: by a vote of just 5-4, the justices could decide that a *person is not human, only corporations are*.

Don't be surprised. After all, there is a precedent: the awful *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision. In this 1857 ruling, the Supreme Court decided that African-Americans were not human and lacked the rights granted to American citizens. This decision, fortunately, was rectified after the Civil War by the passage of the 14th Amendment, but what's to stop the Court from attempting a similar maneuver in the corporate field? In a supposed bow to equality, could we all be put under the *corporate umbrella*?



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Power forward Jordan Morgan on U-M basketball

by Susan Beckett

As the only starter on the University of Michigan (U-M) basketball team that has more than one full season of college ball under his belt, fifth-year senior Jordan Morgan helps his younger teammates recognize the offensive sets of opposing teams. He often can be seen waving a teammate into positions as he slides back to cut off his own man.

Though listed as a power forward – the position he is likely to play at the next level – the 6’8” Morgan mostly plays as an undersized center for U-M. He has compensated for the height challenge by combining his speed and athleticism with his ability to sniff out offensive schemes early. He often beats the opposing center down the floor to score on offense and establish position on defense. Once in position, he uses his strength and quickness to impede the opposing player’s progress to the basket. His defensive prowess is such that he was named to the All-Big 10 Defensive Team last year, despite playing half the season with an injured ankle.

Jordan recalls taking a lot of charges when he started playing at University of Detroit Jesuit High School, and in his sophomore year there became a believer in team defense as the key to winning championships. There has been an evolution in his approach to defense, however.

“Coach Beilein says that either you are, or are not, a shot blocker. If you’re not a shot blocker, he doesn’t care if you ever block a shot. He does not like fouls!” Morgan says.

During his second year of playing at U-M, Morgan attempted fewer shot blocks and reduced his season total of fouls by 31. As he was usually the only U-M player on the court who was over six-foot-six, it was important that he not foul out. Even now he is usually the only big man. According to Morgan, Beilein’s system works best with two forwards and three guards.

Morgan has played with four different starting point guards while at U-M, starting with his freshman year roommate and good friend Darius Morris, who is like a brother to him. When Morris left after his sophomore season for the NBA, Trey Burke took over, and since the latter’s departure for the NBA, Spike Albrecht and Derrick Walton, Jr. have had the job.

“I’ve played with some really good passers and you always



Another strong defensive performance by Jordan Morgan helped shut down Penn State’s offense on January 14.

have to be ready for the ball,” says Morgan. “Someone like Darius who is six-foot-four can pass the ball over the top so you’re catching it up high and finishing. But Trey, who’s only six foot, he’ll use a bounce pass and you’ll get the ball low. It’s a partnership – you have to adjust.”

All that adjusting has prepared Morgan to receive the ball and finish under all circumstances. That has come in handy this year playing with multiple teammates who are good at passing the ball when the defense swarms them.

Morgan’s first exposure to U-M athletics was through his maternal grandfather, a long-time football season-ticket holder. Though he admired the football team, young Jordan did not think much of the basketball program. Coach Beilein, however, did impress him.

“Coach Beilein was a genuinely good dude. He cares about the athletes’ families and sees himself as an educator. He expects you to bring a certain level of care. We don’t recruit high maintenance players. He said I would have the opportunity to help rebuild program,” says Morgan.

Lucky for U-M, Morgan is drawn to challenges. He faced one soon after arriving at U-M when he damaged his knee and had to undergo surgery, taking him out of basketball for his entire

always been hard on himself, it was a challenge to ignore setbacks and move on. It was a downward spiral until the season ended and he could get away. Rejuvenated, Morgan accepted an invitation to play with Athletes in Action in the Ivory Coast against the African National Team.

The faith he had been calling on during the spring acquired definition during his time with Athletes in Action. He realized he had been basing too much of his self-worth on what others thought of his performance in areas that they thought were important.

Morgan is an outstanding student, having graduated in four years with a degree in industrial and operations management. He is finishing up the last nine credits towards a master’s degree in manufacturing engineering this semester. He is a warm, faithful and gracious person. But because of the status conferred on him as an athlete, only his performance on the court was defining who he was.

“I had to be broken to realize that I was so much more than a basketball player,” Morgan recalls.

Check back next month for more on Jordan Morgan’s journey of self-discovery, and look for him around town during International Vendor Week, February 3-11, when he will be selling Groundcover News with our vendors.



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Ann Arbor Poetry Slam

by Garret Potter
Groundcover Contributor

The Ann Arbor Poetry Slam took place every month for 20 years, downtown at the Heidelberg on Main Street. After Chicago's original Green Mill Slam, Ann Arbor's was the second-longest-running poetry slam in the world. About three years ago it all stopped.

Early in 2013, Garret Potter, a familiar voice in the Portland slam scene, planned to move to Ann Arbor. Upon finding out that the slam had ceased, he was eager to see it back on the map. Searching the web for the local poets, previous hosts, and current poetry events, he found Lindsay Stone – poet, activist, graphic designer, and former poetry slam host. They began to coordinate, search for the best venue, dream, and craft a unique format.

On October 13, the reboot of Ann Arbor Poetry Slam went live – thanks to the hospitality of Silvio's Organic Ristorante on North University at State Street. The first week, there were three open-mic poets, a feature performance by award-winning artist Scott Woods, and 10 poets competing in the slam.



Garret Potter is a talented young poet from Portland who has helped resurrect the Ann Arbor Poetry Slam.

New faces share their voices each week. In December, the Ann Arbor Poetry Slam was once again certified with Poetry Slam, Inc., the sanctioning body of the National Poetry Slam. It is an exciting time to experience live performance poetry in Ann Arbor.

The only rules to the slam are that the poem must be an original piece written by the performer, delivered in

three minutes or less, without props or instruments, solo, and clothed. Everything else goes: read, sing, talk, say, rap, yell – whatever. It takes great work to tame this three-headed beast of fellow-poets, the audience, and judges. Everyone present plays their part.

After each poem, the audience responds however they see fit to influence the judges' decision. Then, judges hold

up scores from 0.0 to 10.0. The six top-scoring poets in round one continue on to perform one more poem in round two. The poet with the highest cumulative score wins that night's slam.

Some weeks, Silvio puts a gift card on the line for the winner. Hosts sometimes bring prizes. But more importantly, all competing poets earn points that add up over the season (September to March), culminating in April at the Ann Arbor Poetry Slam City Final. There, the 10 top-scoring poets compete for five spots to represent Ann Arbor at the 2014 National Poetry Slam in Oakland, California.

Sign-ups start at 7:30 and the event begins at 8:00. You are invited to contribute your ears, your heart, and your voice and to enjoy the rush of live performance poetry!

For more about the Ann Arbor Poetry Slam, visit annarborpoetryslam.com or [facebook.com/annarborpoetryslam](https://www.facebook.com/annarborpoetryslam).

Check out some of Garret's poetry on page 9.

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ACROSS

1. Actor Alan
5. Ointment
9. Regurgitate
13. Demeanor
14. Soft wood
15. Every
16. Exclusively
17. Broadcasted
18. Franka Potente role, _____ Kesakhian
19. Revenue less expenses
20. Opposed to (prefix)
21. Son of Daedalus
23. Pittsburgh Pirates' pitcher
26. Comedian Jack
27. Here and _____
28. Diamonds (slang)
31. Device operated by foot
34. Prayer word
36. Lug
37. Make use of
38. Zero
39. Larry Hagman role
40. Await, as a decision
41. Setting for *The Divine Comedy*
42. Flower pots
43. Exist
44. Government agency (abbr.)
45. Disfigure
46. Famous film actor
52. Where What was
55. Lairs
56. Foot part
57. Actor Wilson
58. Inactive
60. British school
61. Olympic cyclist Barry
62. Under (poetic)
63. Disorder
64. Greek god
65. Festival
66. Comedian Johnson

DOWN

1. With
2. Queen Elizabeth 2, for example
3. Actress Burke
4. Nonspecific quantity
5. Town in China
6. Eighth century king of Kent
7. British securities market (abbr.)

Presidential names

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57						58	59					60		
61						62						63		
64						65						66		

8. Manhattan Avenue or Square
9. _____ chair; palanquin
10. Duo
11. Off-white
12. "_____ the Boss"
14. Musical instrument
20. Island group
22. Female of various species
24. Class of analgesics (abbr.)
25. Ring
28. Flower
29. Make from wicker
30. Scrambled food
31. "_____ Doc" (François) Duvalier
32. _____ *After: A Cinderella Story*
33. Hamlet, for example
34. _____ to the ground
35. 1/1000 inch

36. Small version of
39. Actress Linda
41. Figure skater Tonya
44. Cooling device
45. Employee of the _____
46. Sharpens
47. Utopian
48. Mattress manufacturer
49. Aquatic mammal
50. Bird house
51. Having a high mass-to-volume ratio
52. Soft drink
53. Pitcher
54. Relinquish
59. Teachers' union (abbr.)
60. Illustrated Shinto tablet

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

February Calendar of Events

February 6 – 4th Annual Saline Area Schools “Empty Bowl Project,”
5:30-7:30 p.m. Food Gatherers benefit includes silent auction of “celebrity bowls,” food prepared by Saline High School’s Culinary Arts Department, and music entertainment. Saline High School Commons, 1300 Campus Pwky., Saline, Michigan, 48176. More info: (734) 761-2796, www.foodgatherers.org.

February 6 – Lecture: “Assessing the Human Rights Crisis in Honduras,”
7-9 p.m. Lifelong social activist Martha Grevatt offers testimony about her experience in the most violent nation in the world. Wesley Foundation, 602 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. More info: www.icpj.net.

February 6 – Film Festival: LUNAFEST, 7-9 p.m. Traveling festival of award-winning short films by, for, and about women. Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, Michigan League, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. More info: www.lunafest.org.

February 7-9 – Annual University of Michigan Ice Carving Extravaganza, 3-7 (Fri) / 10-5 (Sat) / 10-2 (Sun). Watch members of the U-M Ice Carving Team as they carve sculptures on the sidewalks of Main St., Liberty St., Washington St., and Fourth Ave.

Downtown Ann Arbor. More info: mainstreetannarbor.org.

February 15 – 6th Annual Ford Lake Frozen Leap, 10:00 a.m. (registration) - noon (event begins). Jump into a freezing cold lake to raise funds and awareness for local nonprofits including: SOS Community Services, Growing Hope, Ele’s Place, and Detroit’s Dollars for Scholars. Lake Shore Apartments, 2500 Lake Shore Blvd., Ypsilanti. Registration and donations: frozenleap.com.

February 16 – 8th Annual Depot Town Chili Challenge, 3-6 p.m. Sample chili prepared by Depot Town restaurants and cast your vote for the best one. \$5 fee goes to SOS Community Services. Depot Town, Ypsilanti. More info: (734) 485-8730, info@soscs.org.

February 16 – Workshop: “Welfare Simulation,” 1:45-3:30 p.m. A welfare/ poverty simulation is an experiential workshop that exposes participants to the realities of living on public assistance. Register in advance by 2/16 (leave name and email/phone). Vandenberg Room, Michigan League, 911 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. To register, call (734) 663-1870 or email chuck@icpj.net. More info: www.icpj.net/program-areas/racial-economic-justice/welfare-simulations.

The Score

by Garret Potter
Groundcover Contributor

Last night I won a poetry competition,
or maybe a foot race,
or Scrabble
or marbles.

Each time that I receive hospitality, praise, and encouragement,
I eat to my fill,
dance, play, rest,
and still, there is a tension,
a nervousness,
a hunger.

All my life I have felt the pull of codependency,
the thirst for nurture,
a scent on the wind for sustenance that is lasting.

And now, at twenty-nine, alone
at night, walking the streets of Spokane, Portland, Detroit, New Orleans,
I fear the sight of homelessness—

another person,
residing outside,
their sun-bleached clothing,
their weathered face—
the crow's feet,
the cracked lips—

their flashing siren bloodshot porcelain
eyes
shine and shed light through the windows of my soul,
and with radiant mystical hands
they grab hold of my heart,
trap it like a cupped butterfly,
fragile, delicate,
and with a conscience beyond what I recognize,
they ask me,

“Do you know we
are one?

(family,
flesh, blood, soul, and earth marrow,
dust and water to mud concrete
to build towers
or farm rows or us?)”

And I can only answer,
“Yes.

I know.

But, I don't always know
where I stop and you begin,
where mine is yours and ours is all...”

As long as I can remember,
a voice has echoed steadily inside of me: Contribute!

And in the pressure to do more,
be more,
share more, give more—
in the overwhelm—
I breathe—it is enough!
I receive—it is enough!
I release—it is enough!

And the harmony of our voices
becomes the only song
scoring the moments
that I know
I am fully alive.

On Privatization

by Susan Sabo
Groundcover Contributor

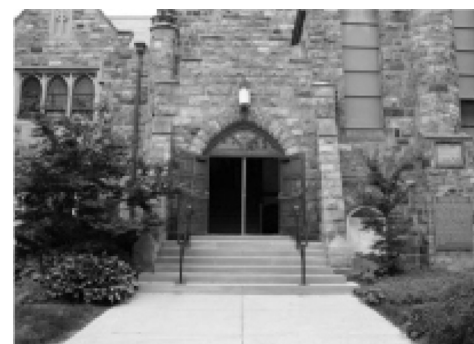
The MBAs sat around surmising
That the best thing for the firm
Would be privatizing.
It would be very fine
To increase
The bottom line.
But do you think
They can foresee
What it will do
To the worker
And to his family?
His pension will without a doubt
Be completely ended and cashed out.
And now he'll have a 401K
Which he can't contribute to, any-
way.
He'll make minimum wage
And little more.
Raises will go out the door.
He'll have to take a second job
So he can feed his kids.
He's tired and stressed
And starts to drink.
His life has hit the skids.
Mom works late, too.
The kids lack attention.
They get in trouble at school
Get demerits and detention.
They end up in trouble –
It's no surprise –
Or in a brand new prison
Someone can privatize.

Cleaning Silver

by Susan Sabo
Groundcover Contributor

My mother's
Silver tea service
Was given
Back to me
When she died,
As she had wanted it
A family legacy.
I never liked
Polishing silver
But now I do it
'Cause I know
How proud
It made her feel
To see it shine and glow.

And as I wipe away the tarnish
That built up
For two bad years
I wipe away
Some sadness
And wipe away
Some tears.



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www.bethlehem-ucc.org (734) 665-6149

Bethlehem Church is home for the Groundcover Office

Sundays:

8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship Service

10:00 am ~ Church School

Upcoming Events:

Friday, February 7th- Annual Sauerkraut Supper

6:00 pm-7:30 pm

\$12 adults, \$5 children 10 and under

Meals on Wheels in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti

by Sue Budin
Groundcover Contributor

This past Thanksgiving, a volunteer with the Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels program delivered five meals to a senior facility. At her last delivery, the man invited her in for a cup of tea and they sat and talked for a good half-hour. As she was getting ready to leave, he thanked her for spending some of her holiday with him, told her she was a great woman – and that it would be a great honor to marry her.

Recently, Meals on Wheels added a new client who was very familiar with their services because her father had been a client just the year before. The application that determines eligibility requested an emergency contact. The woman knew how important this number could be, because when her father didn't answer the door, the delivery person called her and her brother. The brother found their father had had a stroke. Because of the call, the father was rushed to the hospital and his life was saved.

"That is why Meals on Wheels is delivering more than just a meal. We and all the other Meals on Wheels across the Country deliver a meal with a smile with a safety check each day," said Alison Foreman, the executive director of the Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels program.

These stories illustrate the sometimes unexpected benefits of delivering meals to homebound people, who often feel isolated and appreciate the human contact that is made with that knock on the door, for deliverer and receiver alike. Often, these people may see only one person that day and the person is the Meals on Wheels deliverer.

Meals on Wheels (not called this until the 1990s) began during World War II, when nurses delivered meals to British servicemen. The first actual domestic program began in 1954 in Philadelphia with services to homebound clients. In 1972, the Older Americans Act provided federal funding and in 1998, their name officially became Meals on Wheels – a nutrition assistance program that has served millions of seniors and others across the country.

Both the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels programs bring one or two meals a day to people who cannot shop and prepare meals for themselves. Contrary to popular belief, these programs are not only for the elderly – although that is their major population served – but for anyone at any income level who has these limitations. Eligibility is based on "functional health," according to Beth Adams, director of the



Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels volunteer David Wallner delivers a hot meal to local resident Helen. Wallner has donated his time to the program for more than seven years.

Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels program. Deliveries in Ann Arbor are made by volunteers but the Ypsilanti program employs some staff in addition to its volunteers.

The Ypsilanti program also provides pet food through a joint sponsorship with the Humane Society called Bountiful Bowls. The Humane Society delivers food that they pay for to the Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels office. Recipients are given buckets, which are filled and then replenished when needed. The food is of good quality and is very much appreciated by both pet and owner.

Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels Program volunteers deliver two meals at each stop, Monday through Saturday, and an additional meal on Saturday to be eaten on Sunday. They can also provide the drink supplement Ensure for those at nutritional risk. Each volunteer delivers 10 to 13 meals in a two- or three-hour midday shift. Meals are made at the University of Michigan Health System Patient Food and Nutrition Services. A typical hot meal includes soup, chicken, potatoes, a vegetable, a salad, roll, dessert and skim milk. The smaller meal is usually a sandwich, fruit, juice and milk. Some special diets can be accommodated.

To apply for the Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels program, either the person, their health care provider, social worker, or family member can call (734) 998-6686. An in-home assessment will be done then and repeated every six months. Often during this assessment, referrals can be made to other agencies as other needs are determined. For example, sometimes people aren't aware of eligibility for a bridge card or how to get in-home assistance. Currently, the Ann Arbor program is serving 289 people a week. To be eligible, a person

must have an address, but someone who knows they will have housing soon can be put on a waiting list and call again once they're in their home.

The program is always in need of volunteers. Last year, volunteers drove the equivalent of going from White Horse Key, Florida to Dead Horse, Alaska 15 times! The Ann Arbor Meals on Wheels website is med.umich.edu/chs/services/meal.htm.

Meals are offered at no cost, but a monthly statement is sent to each recipient with a request for donations. Funding provided by the University of Michigan Health System, grants from local groups, Title III of the Older Americans Act, Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, and the Area Agency on Aging 1-B is supplemented by an annual golf outing fundraiser.

The Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels program offers one hot meal a day, delivered midday. Fifty percent of their recipients get a second meal at that time – soup and a sandwich – which has to be paid for at a cost of \$2. Cost for all meals is based on a sliding-fee scale based on income. Clients whose monthly income is \$3,000 or more pay the full amount, \$7, for the main meal. Applications can be made through self-referral, a social worker or family. There is a referral form on their website, ymow.org, or people can call (734) 487-9669.

Once a person is at the top of their waiting list, Eastern Michigan University nursing students, students from the University of Michigan, or volunteers will do an assessment to see if the person qualifies and to ask them about any physical ailments, nutritional concerns, and need for other services. Referrals are often made to Catholic

Social Services when other needs are identified. The assessment is repeated every six months. Intake volunteers do ask for income information and request donations. There is a wait list of four to six weeks. A person should put their name on the wait list once they know they will have housing.

The Ypsilanti program is 60 to 70 percent funded by government grants, Washtenaw County, and the Area Agency on Aging. They also receive contributions from United Way and private foundations.

They are always looking for volunteers as "ride-alongs" in their "Adopt a High Rise" program, to do office work, and to help with fundraisers. Students can get school credit for grant writing. Families with children are welcome, as are school groups and scout troops.

The meals are provided by Eastern Michigan University. All meals are low-sodium and are diabetic-friendly. At present, they have no vegetarian option. A typical meal includes a meat dish, a grain and two vegetables, plus bread and milk. In the future, they may be able to accommodate more specialized diets.

The Ypsilanti program is working on a new project in which SNAP benefits (food stamps) would pay \$2 toward each meal. If this goes through, it could help alleviate the waiting period and allow more people to get two meals a day. They are also hoping that more of the younger people (under 60) who qualify for the Medicaid Waiver program can get all their meals covered. Those who have very low incomes and major health issues may qualify and can be assessed by a caseworker at the Department of Social Services.

Meals on Wheels' primary purpose is to provide nutritious food to those in need, but almost as important, it is a crucial point of connection between people who often feel cut off from others. These daily interactions let them know someone cares and that they are not alone.

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Thanks to GroundCover News for spreading the word and providing an outlet where there was none. We are proud to support your mission and good work!

New Year but old traditions

by Ross Bernhaut
Groundcover Contributor

Migration is an essential part of nature. Animals of all kinds migrate seasonally, be it for access to more food, for mating practices, or just to seek out better weather. Humans migrate for all the same reasons. However, the largest human migration on the planet is for a reason unique to people: migrant workers returning to their permanent homes to celebrate the Spring Festival (春节), which begins on the first day of the first month in the Chinese lunar calendar, or January 31 on the Gregorian calendar this year.

During this New Year holiday, over 250 million migrant workers and many millions more will, by air, road, and rail, make the journey back to their hometowns to reunite with their families for the start of the Year of the Horse, totaling what is expected to exceed 3.5 billion transportation trips in the time surrounding the Spring Festival. As the most important holiday in China, the entire country practically shuts down for the first seven days of the New Year because the majority of people have off from school and work.

The Spring Festival is teeming with fun and symbolic traditions for the celebration. Setting off fireworks is always a big part of the celebration because, as legend has it, they scare off the monster, more broadly representing evil and misfortune, which would otherwise terrorize villages throughout the country. These days, however, some Chinese cities are banning fireworks to combat a potentially more hazardous monster: that of air pollution.

Another, more recent convention for celebrating the Chinese New Year is watching China Central Television's (CCTV) annual Spring Festival Evening Show. As with everything in China, they do it big. This show airs on TV for over five uninterrupted hours,

consisting of singing, dancing, acrobatics and comedy accompanied by a healthy dose of the government's political propaganda. It attracts around 700 million viewers every year, making it the most popular television program on the planet. People watch the show while cooking, eating and chatting to see the spectacular display of culture.

Probably the favorite Spring Festival tradition among Chinese children is the giving of red envelopes filled with money. The color red symbolizes luck, and the envelopes are usually embellished with gold characters or phrases for happiness, wealth, and prosperity. Older generations typically give red envelopes with money to younger generations, especially children and teenagers. The amount of money inside each envelope varies, but generally increases with the age of the child.

An additional common practice is mounting the phrase 幸福 (xìngfú), meaning happiness, on walls or doors for the Spring Festival. Yet, 福 (fú) is usually pasted upside down. This is because the character for "upside down," 倒 (dào), sounds the same as the character 到 (dào), to arrive. Hanging 福 upside down therefore signifies the arrival of good fortune in the New Year.

Food is extremely important in Chinese culture, and no less so with respect to holidays. Every holiday in China is celebrated by eating different foods. On a broad scale, the people of northern China like eating 面食 (miàn shí), which includes noodles, dumplings and pancakes, while southern China prefers consuming rice. This explains why, to celebrate the Spring Festival, families from northern China choose to eat dumplings. Dumplings look similar to an ancient currency used in China. Moreover, the word for dumplings, 饺子 (jiǎo zi), is phonetically similar

to 交子 (jiāo zi), meaning "to welcome in the New Year." On the contrary, the people of southern China consume sticky rice cakes to usher in a prosperous year, as the pronunciation of these 年糕 (niángāo) is the same as the pronunciation of 年高 (niángāo), which means "growing" or "year growth."

Another popular tradition for the Chinese New Year is eating fish, since the character for fish, 鱼 (yú), is phonetically identical to 余 (yú), which means surplus. People leave some fish on their plate to symbolize having a surplus of food and wealth. And finally, for many, no Chinese New Year's celebration is complete without alcohol, the Chinese character for which, 酒 (jiǔ), sounds the same as 久 (jiǔ), meaning longevity.

The lunar-calendar Chinese New Year is celebrated elsewhere in Asia, too. Recognized as the mark of the dawn of a New Year by billions of people, the Spring Festival and the corresponding celebrations in other countries are extremely important as a time of reflection and resolution for a huge percentage of the world's population. Always a fun, vibrant, holiday rich with culture and tradition, the celebration of the Chinese New Year is becoming more impressive every year. At such a significant and festive time, it is no surprise that this year's Spring Festival will witness the largest human migration the world has ever seen.



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Curried Chickpeas and Tofu



by Lisa Sonnenburg
Groundcover Contributor

1 cup brown rice

1 cake tofu, cut into ½-inch cubes

1 medium onion, chopped

1 garlic glove, minced

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 teaspoon curry powder

½ teaspoon turmeric

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Pinch of cayenne (optional)

1, 16-ounce can of chickpeas (undrained)

2 tomatoes, chopped

Salt to taste

Yogurt, tzaziki or flavored yogurt dip (optional)

1. Cook rice according to directions (usually takes 45-50 minutes).

2. While rice is cooking, press tofu by placing cubes in between paper towels and put a heavy book or pan on top of tofu. Leave for 15 minutes.

3. When tofu is done, sauté onion and garlic in oil until onions are translucent.

4. Stir in cumin, coriander, curry, turmeric, pepper, and cayenne (optional).

5. Add tofu and cook until tofu is coated with spices.

6. Add chick peas and ½ cup of their liquid.

7. Simmer for 5 minutes.

8. Add tomatoes and simmer until rice is done.

9. Serve chickpea and tofu mixture over rice.

10. Add yogurt, tzaziki or yogurt dip (try roasted red pepper flavor) if desired and mix thoroughly.

A hearty vegetarian dish for cold winter nights! Enjoy!

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<p>So, aren't you proud your old Mom took a risk and tried something new?</p> <p>You mean the way you finally got up the nerve to jump in his lap five years after I did? Very impressive, Mom!</p>	<p>Make fun of me all you want, but I'm more stuck in my ways than you. If it wasn't a happy part of my past I tend to be cautious.</p> <p>A cautious five years not enjoying the wonders of the human lap. How sad.</p>	<p>At least I overcame my fears. Though I've noticed you jump in his lap less and less now.</p> <p>That's because when parents start doing something it becomes less cool.</p>	<p>Are you saying his lap is like Facebook?</p> <p>Exactly! I now prefer his shoulder; it's the Snapchat of human body parts. All the cool kitties are doing it.</p>
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